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ABSTRACT

The development of articulation agreements in southeastern Virginia between predominantly black Norfolk State University, and predominantly white Tidewater Community College is described. A commitment to eliminate unnecessary duplication between traditionally black and traditionally white institutions in the same area was made in the 1978 Virginia Plan for Equal Opportunity in State Supported Institutions of Higher Education (the Virginia Plan). Based on a 1978 Tidewater Duplication Study, the two institutions were charged with developing two-plus-two transfer programs in the areas of office administration/secretarial science, accounting, and business education. A two-plus-two program is defined as one allowing students interested in a particular four-year degree program to take 2 years at a community college and then automatically transfer to a senior college for 2 additional years. Discussions leading to resolution of the program duplication issues were held at the college as well as at the state level. The outcomes of the first meeting in 1979, which involved teaching faculty from the three discipline areas, were an articulation model that led to eight articulation agreements rather than the three recommended, and an atmosphere characterized by friendly and respectful deliberations. Curricula modifications and policy changes evolved easily with the purposes of better meeting the needs of students. The negotiations resulted in agreement on nontraditional credits and fulfillment of requirements, a desire to comply with state and institutional policies, and agreement on admission and financial aid procedures. The objectives of a steering committee, resolutions committee, and task groups are outlined. (SW)

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# A SUCCESSFUL MODEL FOR ARTICULATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TWO-PLUS-TWO PROGRAM AGREEMENTS BETWEEN NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY, A PREDOMINANTLY BLACK FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTION, AND TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE, A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE MULTI-CAMPUS TWO-YEAR PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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INSTITUTE ON DESEGREGATION

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This paper has been identified by a joint project of The Institute on Desegregation at North Carolina Central University and ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at George Washington University. The purposes of this project are to identify, collect, and make available literature concerned with

(1) the problems of minority students in higher education in general and
(2) the problems of desegregation in historically black colleges and universities in particular.

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NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY IS A CONSTITUENT INSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

## INTRODUCTION

In the 1978 Virginia Plan for Equal Opportunity in State Supported Institutions of Higher Education, hereafter referred to as the Virginia Plan, Commonwealth of Virginia officials made a commitment to eliminate educationally unnecessary duplication between its traditionally black and traditionally white institutions in the same service area. As a means of accomplishing this objective, a study of alleged program duplication in Tidewater was conducted during the summer of 1978.

The Tidewater Duplication Study, hereafter referred to as the Study, proposed elimination of duplication, and utilization of specialization and cooperative programs as three methods of resolution to the problem of alleged program duplication in the Tidewater Virginia area. These three methods were found acceptable under both the Virginia Plan and the ammended criteria established in the second supplemental order of April 22, 1977 in the case of Adams vs Califano.

Three institutions, Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University and Tidewater Community College, located in Tidewater Virginia, were responsible for meeting and implementing requirements found in the Study.

Norfolk State University and Tidewater Community College were charged in the Study with developing two-plus-two transfer programs in the areas of office administration/secretarial science, accounting and business education. As defined on page 15 of the Study, "...a 2+2 program is one in which students interested in a particular four-year degree program can take two years at a community college and then automatically transfer to a senior college for two more years of study upon

successful completion of the two years at a community college." Furthermore, the two-plus-two articulation arrangement was characterized in the Study as program specialization, which was one of the three recommended methods of resolution of the problem of program duplication.

The Tidewater Study Advisory Committee indicated on page 17 of the Study, "...such articulation agreements between Norfolk State College and the community colleges will prove advantageous to the objectives of the Virginia Plan in that other race students will be encouraged to attend Norfolk State College." Furthermore, it was believed by local college officials that the two-plus-two agreements would expand mobility between the two-year and four-year institutions, assist in student recruitment and admissions, reduce attrition, promote faculty and staff exchanges, and eliminate unnecessary program duplication. It is especially noteworthy that discussions leading to resolution of the program duplication issue were held at the college level as well as the state level. Institutional boards, presidents, vice presidents, deans, faculty and students were provided opportunities for participation in the desegregation process. Resolution of alleged duplication was greatly enhanced by the direct involvement of institutional parties. Enhancement occurred because extending negotiations and discussions to the college level placed college personnel in a vested-interest position, thereby resulting in increased college interest in meeting stipulated requirements.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED INSTITUTIONS

Tidewater Community College, founded in 1968, is one of several multi-campus institutions in the twenty-three college state-supported Virginia Community College System. Serving a district of over one thousand square miles, Tidewater Community College was established to meet the educational needs of the cities of Chesapeake,

Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, a part of Suffolk and a part of Isle of Wight County. It presently operates on three permanent campuses, two centers, and at several off-campus locations in various military installations and in the community.

The College annually serves over 25,000 credit commuter students, many attending on a part-time basis. Curricula are offered in fifty-two different areas, culminating with either a certificate, diploma, or associate degree.

The College serves a student population comprised of 77.6% majority, 19.1% black, and 3.3% other minority. The College has increased its minority population from 12% in 1972 to 22% in 1978. Currently, individual campuses tend to reflect the racial mix of the community served, while the College reflects the racial mix of the Tidewater area.

College student growth is projected at an average rate of 5% over the next several years, with enrollments leveling in the mid-1980's.

Norfolk State University was founded as the Norfolk Unit of Virginia Union University in 1935 to provide training on the junior-college level for high school graduates of the Norfolk-Portsmouth area. During the depression of the thirties, educators and civic leaders felt more keenly than ever their duty to unemployed youth who were unable to continue their education outside of the community because of lack of means, and were therefore deprived of the opportunity to obtain training for certain jobs that might be available in the community.

The Norfolk Polytechnic College was chartered in March, 1942, to take over the functions and assets of the Norfolk Unit of Virginia Union University.

The Norfolk Division of Virginia State College was created by an act of the

1944 General Assembly of Virginia, which directed Virginia State College to establish and operate a Division in the City of Norfolk. The act further provided for the transfer of the facilities of the Virginia Polytechnic College to Virginia State College.

On February 1, 1969, the Norfolk Division of Virginia State College became Norfolk State College; an independent, four-year, degree-granting institution with its own board of Visitors, its own President, and its own proud tradition of rendering quality service to its students, its community, and its Commonwealth.

In 1972, the College was authorized by the General Assembly of Virginia to grant the master's degree. An Act of the General Assembly of 1979 changed the name of the institution to Norfolk State University, effective July 1, 1979.

Norfolk State University is a co-educational, urban institution offering curricula in liberal arts and sciences, technology, and professional programs at the associate baccalaureate and master's levels.

Head count enrollment at the institution is currently 7,303. In-state students constitute nearly 90 percent of the total enrollment, 65 percent reside in the Tidewater area, and 35 percent are from non-commuting distances. Out-of-state enrollment has increased, over the last five years, and it is expected that this trend will continue.

With approximately only 14 percent of the students currently living in dormitories, the need for on-campus housing space is evident. The ratio of male to female students is approximately 40/60. Since Norfolk State was founded by black citizens of the Tidewater region, it has traditionally served that community. Minority enrollment (white) has increased significantly during the past five years,

partially due to the addition of graduate programs. This increase in minority population is expected to continue to rise as a result of articulation agreements with the Virginia Community College System and the addition of high demand programs not offered by other institutions in the area.

THE SPECIFIC CHARGE--TWO-PLUS-TWO AGREEMENTS

Having established the fact that the Study, which became a part of the Virginia Plan, charged Norfolk State University and Tidewater Community College with the responsibility of addressing the duplication of associate degree-level programs through the development of two-plus-two agreements, the administrations at both institutions moved quickly to meet the June 1, 1979 deadline imposed by the Study. Careful analysis both of traditional articulation barriers and specific/unique problems associated with HEW/OCR enforced desegregation by both institutions had the effect of preparing the presidents, academic dean, and academic vice president for effectively dealing with problems, issues, and concerns raised by institutional constituencies.

The first meeting of institutional representatives was held on February 5, 1979 at Tidewater Community College at the invitation of the Tidewater Community College president. Teaching faculty from the three discipline areas of accounting, office procedures/secretarial science and business education, and upper-level management participated in the meeting. From the first meeting, an articulation model emerged which served to guide institutional representatives through not only the three required two-plus-two agreements, but eight such agreements. Furthermore, three other programs which follow the articulation model currently are under development.

## TRADITIONAL ISSUES OF ARTICULATION

Transfer of academic credit from one institution to another often has been inhibited and characterized by policies based on excessive bureaucratization, antiquated premises, and general lack of interest. Historically, faculties have protected their turf by raising questions about equality of credits, institutional image, student aptitudes, exactness of course content, grading practices, sex, instructional methodologies, race, course prerequisites, residency requirements, faculty preparation, grade point averages, academic calendars, and validity of non-traditional credits, to mention just a few areas of concern.

Administrators, like faculty, have not had a very solid record in support of articulation and transfer of credits. They often have failed to fund offices for articulation, neglected to staff special counseling positions, resisted developing and publishing transfer information understandable to students, ignored opportunities to encourage personal interaction between professionals from sending institutions, placed little emphasis on establishing clearly-defined standards for recognizing non-traditional studies, and failed to support or establish articulation conferences. Long ago college administrators should have reversed the actions cited above and, in the process, should have developed communication networks to aid transferring students, established hearing boards to ensure students an opportunity to appeal transfer of credits, provided better consumer information, supported research to access transfer problems, performed validation studies of non-traditional credits, and clearly defined institutional goals to be communicated to students.*



*An extensive analysis of college transfer issues may be found in College Transfer, Working Papers and Recommendations From the Airlie House Conference, 2-4, December 1973.

Not all the blame for the lack of effective articulation policies can reasonably be placed on the faculty and administrators of colleges and universities. At the institutional level, the president and board must be in full support of and committed to the concept of articulation for it to be a viable practice. It would seem that if the president and board were committed to the concept of articulation, the faculty and administrative shortcomings cited above would, over a period of time, tend to become nonexistent. In other words, articulation would become an institutional goal toward which all parties would strive.

In some states, the transfer of credits from one state supported institution to another is a legislative requirement. In Virginia, however, the transfer of credits is an institutional matter and the value or worth of credits varies from one institution to another. Therefore, the presidents of Norfolk State University and Tidewater Community College had to display unusual leadership in overcoming many of the transfer barriers cited in this section of the paper. However, a legitimate question to raise about this presidential involvement concerns the "why" of the involvement. It probably is fair to conclude that the external stimulus of the HEW/OCR negotiations excited the presidents to action. Regardless of the "why," the facts are clear that both presidents were forceful and directive in leadership efforts to overcome existing traditional barriers to articulation.

## SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

Articulation between competing institutions located in a relatively small geographic area with a limited and slowly-growing population presents its own set of problems, with comptetition serving to further heighten many traditional barriers to the transfer of credits. To add to this situation an imposed HEW/OCR settlement

between a predominantly four-year black institution and a predominantly white two-year institution would seem to result in an environment so intensified and politicized that little if any substantive discussion could be held.

Prior to the two-plus-two discussions, the history of the two institutions had not shown a single articulated program, even though both state-supported institutions had existed practically side by side since the inception of Tidewater Community College in 1968. It could be said that history had kept them apart and now the political realities of historical decisions had forced them together. Therefore, the working environment was characterized by a combination of traditional barriers associated with articulation between four-year and two-year colleges and the tensions, emotions, suspicions, fears, and generally, the politically intensified atmosphere present during negotiations between HEW, state and college officials.

In addition to social and political concerns, substantive educational issues were present in the working environment. The crucial question of academic standards seemed to be the most serious of the educational issues. Once the question of academic standards was resolved, the other educational questions seemed to dissipate.

The articulation model employed to handle the development of the two-plus-two agreements treated the academic standards question and other educational questions through an educational equality theory which incorporated the idea that two-plus-two efforts should not lead to lowering academic standards or modifying curriculum goals for either institution, but that new and different ways for treating credits, degrees, students, records, and an assortment of other concerns needed to be considered and adopted as the way of thinking. The educational equality theory assumed that the academic and professional motivations, preparation, and qualtiy of the

faculty and students at the two institutions in like course levels, was sufficiently equal to permit transfer and acceptance of credits, courses, degrees, and students without extensive analysis and exhaustive dissection of each and every course contained in a curriculum of study. It was decided that the chief concern would be that students receive college level preparation in their particular field of study and be able to compete successfully if transfer or reverse transfer occurred between the two institutions.

Having addressed educational questions through the educational equality theory and having presidential commitments which served to defuse political and social issues, institutional representatives were freed to develop two-plus-two agreements in an environment absent of elitist ideas, turf protection, excessive bureaucratic rules, arguments about equality of credits, and other like barriers to articulation.

## THE ARTICULATION MODEL

Articulation between two institutions serving different clientele, having different goals, emerging from different histories and, basically, having more differences than likenesses must be addressed through sober exchanges by institutional representatives committed to the concept of articulation, possessing knowledge of articulation pitfalls, and following a prescribed systematic process. Institutional representatives involved in the negotiations between Norfolk State University and Tidewater Community College developed a model for articulation which included the following basic assumptions:

a) presidential commitment, involvement, and leadership would facilitate the process

b) faculty involvement in curriculum analysis and modification would be crucial to any lasting agreement

c) deadlocks in negotiations would be a reality

d) varying forms of resistance to change would emerge periodically

e) all participants would have an equal voice in negotiations

f) some mechanism would have to be developed to handle conflicts and deadlocks during and after negotiations

g) in the final analysis the student-customer would stand to gain or lose

h) an educational equality theory would serve to neutralize many traditional barriers to articulation

i) two-plus-two agreements would serve to benefit both institutions to an equal degree

j) N S U and T C C would continue to be viable institutions for many years to come

STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee with equal faculty and administrative memberships from each institution, co-chaired by the college presidents, was responsible for:

a) analyzing the Virginia Plan, the Study, and the state and national political climate

b) establishing an educational equality theory

c) developing guidelines for two-plus-two agreements

d) defining curricula for consideration

e) charging the Resolutions Committee with the responsibility

of developing task groups of faculty and division administrators to formulate two-plus-two agreements

f) deciding all deadlocks which were not resolved by the Resolutions Committee

g) preparing all formal reports and reporting all findings to higher authority

h) gaining governing board approval through the co-chairmen

i) acting in the capacity of a hearing board for one year after agreements are instituted to resolve faculty, administrative, and/or student conflicts.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

A Resolutions Committee consisting of the Norfolk State University academic vice president and the Tidewater Community College academic dean was responsible for:

a) establishing task groups of faculty and division administrators to develop two-plus-two agreements

b) defining tasks and timetables to task groups

c) monitoring task group activities

d) breaking deadlocks and resolving conflicts

e) maintaining a professional environment for negotiators

f) insuring consistency of agreements and compliance with Steering Committeee guidelines

g) preparing the agenda and documents for Steering Committee meetings

h) serving as day-to-day institutional contact points

TASK GROUPS

Eleven task groups were formed to develop two-plus-two agreements while two task groups handled administrative details. The task groups took their charge from the Resolutions Committee and worked independently within established Steering Committee guidelines. Operation of the task groups insured that faculty and mid-management administrators developed working details of the agreements.

Task groups reported routinely to the Resolutions Committee. Upon completion of agreements, faculty representatives of the curriculum task groups reported to the Resolutions Committee and presented agreements to the Steering Committee through the Resolutions Committee.

Administrative task groups dealt with admission procedures, registration procedures, miscellaneous forms, details of transcript requirements, costs, publicity requirements, and related paper flow. The main objective of the administrative task groups was to streamline the transfer process so students would be treated as if they had initially enrolled in the four-year institution. In other words, students would perceive the two institutions as one single institution. Decisions reached by the administrative task groups were reported to the Resolutions Committee. The Resolutions Committee reported this information to the Steering Committee.

The structure and functioning of the Steering Committee provided necessary definition and clarity of purpose, procedural guidelines, decisive judgment and leadership, and visible institutional commitment to provide task groups a clear message that institutional cooperation in the development of two-plus-two agreements

was expected.

The Resolutions Committee served the function of planning, monitoring, cushioning, communicating, clarifying, defusing, and reporting. The cooperation and close working relationship of the committee membership served as an example to task groups. Additionally, the Resolutions Committee communicated the need for a change in attitude by institutional representatives composing task groups.

Task groups developed two-plus-two agreements and administrative details. Since task groups were composed of faculty and division administrators, curriculum modifications were accomplished at the teaching level.

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Two institutions of higher learning without a history of cooperation or communication developed, within a six-month period, mutual respect which resulted in curriculum agreements and activities which exceeded recommendations by the Virginia Plan. The methods employed in development of the articulation agreements created an atmosphere characterized by friendly and respectful deliberations leading to eight articulation agreements rather than the three recommended. Curricula modifications and policy changes evolved easily and naturally with the purposes of better meeting the needs of the student. Absent from negotiations were elitist ideas, turf protection, bureaucratic rules, arguments about equality of credits, and disagreements about grading point averages and systems. Present in negotiations were ideas of educational equality, agreement on non-traditional credits, agreement of meeting core requirements, a desire to comply with state and institutional policies and agreement on admission and financial aid procedures.

It is believed that increased cooperation and communication, which was an outcome of successfully implementing the articulation model, will result in increased enrollment of other race students, reduced attrition, increased minority student recruitment, faculty and staff exchanges, and elimination of duplicated programs.

To date, Norfolk State University, Tidewater Community College, and the State Board for the Virginia Community College System have approved the eight two-plus-two agreements. Furthermore, each body has endorsed the further development of like agreements.

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